

Mourning Dove

Zenaida macroura

A graceful, slender-tailed, small-headed dove that's common across the continent. Mourning Doves perch on telephone wires and forage for seeds on the ground; their flight is fast and bullet straight. Their soft, drawn-out calls sound like laments. When taking off, their wings make a sharp whistling or whinnying. Mourning Doves are the most frequently hunted species in North America.

Keys to Identification

Size and Shape

Plump-bodied and long-tailed, with short legs, small bill, and a head that looks particularly small in comparison to the body. The long, pointed tail is unique among North American doves.

Color Pattern

Mourning Doves often match their open-country surroundings. They're delicate brown to buffy-tan overall, with black spots on the wings and black-bordered white tips to the tail feathers.

Behavior

Mourning Doves fly fast on powerful wingbeats, sometimes making sudden ascents, descents, and dodges, their pointed tails stretching behind them.

Habitat

You can see Mourning Doves nearly anywhere except the deep woods. Look for them in fields or patches of bare ground, or on overhead perches like telephone wires.



Measurements

Male

- Length - 9.1 - 13.4 inches
- Wingspan - 17.7 inches
- Weight - 3.4 - 6.0 ounces

Female

- Length - 9.1 - 13.4 inches
- Wingspan - 13.9 - 17.7 inches
- Weight - 3.0 - 5.5 ounces